

**January 9th, 2009**

I rise in support of the Paycheck Fairness Act. Equal pay for equal work must not be just a saying, it must be the law.

Last year I had the honor of joining the Chair of our committee and others in unveiling the portrait of the former New Jersey Representative Mary Norton, who was Chair of the Labor Committee seven decades ago and a tireless advocate then for equal pay.

Under her leadership, Congress passed the 1938 Fair Labor Standards Act that established the 40-hour work week, it outlawed child labor and established a minimum wage of 25 cents an hour. The criticisms we hear today were the same then. The Federal Government shouldn't be involved, the critics said.

I think of Mary Norton today when I say that while we have made significant progress since the Equal Pay Act of 1963, the fight for equality in the workplace is far from over. According to the Census Bureau, women still earn 78 percent of men.

Mary Norton understood that the wage gap was not just a women's issue, it is a family issue. Nowadays, men understand that too. When women earn less for equal work, families are forced to make do with less.

I urge my colleagues to pass the Paycheck Fairness Act.